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Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, N.C., and additional mailing offices. Editorial offices: 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, N.C. 27616. Carolina Country is a registered trademark of the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (ISSN 0008-6746) (USPS 832800)

Postmaster: Send form 3579 to P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, N.C. 27611.

Individual subscriptions, \$8 per year. \$20 outside U.S.A. To change address, send magazine mailing label to your electric cooperative.

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Carolina Country is available on cassette tape as a courtesy of volunteer services at the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Raleigh, N.C. (800) 662-7726.

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Carolina Country magazine is available monthly to members of North Carolina's electric cooperatives. If you are a member of one of these cooperatives but do not receive Carolina Country, you may request a subscription by calling Member Services at the office of your cooperative. If your address has changed, please inform your cooperative.

FEATURES

JIM'S KIDS10

On Dec. 14, Jim Bullins will host his annual "Jim's Kids" Christmas party in Asheboro. It's an emotional and uplifting example of "the power of human connections."

BOATBUILDING IN THE 21ST CENTURY14

Carteret-Craven Electric helped Jones Brothers Marine set up a state-of-the-art boatbuilding shop.

ADVICE FOR AGING GRACEFULLY17

"Do your thing as long as possible, then let them help," plus more of your advice for growing older.

HARD LESSONS26

The lessons learned in states that have restructured their electric utility industry have helped others proceed carefully.

DEPARTMENTS

FIRST PERSON4

Gov. Mike Easley shares his "One North Carolina" vision with The Rural Center . . . A friendly spirit, Elvis Presley's kin, and some huge sweet potatoes.

MORE POWER TO YOU8

A \$100 million loan program for rural business . . . Ways to protect your electronic equipment . . . Using holiday decorations safely.

MARKETPLACE28-33

A showcase of goods and services.

JOYNER'S CORNER31

Santa Claus gets into math.

CAROLINA COMPASS34

December events across the state.

HANK'S GARDENING GUIDE38

About mulches.

ENERGY CENTS40

New kitchen range hoods.

CLASSIFIED ADS41

New this month: Mini-novelties.

CAROLINA KITCHEN42

Sausage Wonton Stars, Raspberry Gelatin Ring, Chocolate Coconut Bars, Cherry Cheese Torte



On the Cover

At last year's Christmas party for "Jim's Kids," Jim Bullins posed with Leonna Cox, 4, of Asheboro, who has skull development problems. See the heartwarming story of "Jim's Kids" on page 10. (Photo by Irene Allred)

See page 10 for story.

One North Carolina Reaching every corner of every community

My vision for One North Carolina is to see our rural and urban areas understand one another's needs, discover the common challenges that we face, and unite to put this state forward in high gear.

Whether we are successful will not depend on whether we balance the budget. People expect us to do that. It depends on whether we make progress in every corner of every county in every community in this state.

I have set in motion a government efficiency commission and a tax modernization commission to analyze what changes need to be made. They are focusing on state government's core mission. The days of budget surplus politics are gone. We need to decide what role we want government to play and how much we have to spend on it.

We are not trying to tax our way out of this recession. We are not trying to cut our way out. You have to grow your way out of a national recession this big.

My strategy is to bring North Carolina out of this downturn much stronger than we went into it, and we can do that if we just make up our mind to be aggressive and be bold. We are not going to get there by being timid or being cautious. The strategy is always simple; it is the implementation that is hard. It takes real discipline, real focus and an awful lot of compromise.

We have to recognize a few facts. One is that cheap labor is gone, not only in North Carolina, but in the nation. We can't compete with Mexico and China on cheap labor. We have to recognize that capital investment follows labor, and the capital investment on cheap labor is going to follow cheap labor out of the country – always has, always will.

But capital investment also will follow skilled labor. That is why it's important that we recognize that new industry will be looking for a skilled work force when this economy turns around. And we should not wait until then to make our investments. That means investments in our community colleges and universities cannot be cut – especially not now. This is a time when we must invest more in education, not less.

We have an achievement gap among the counties and the regions in this state. And we know that there is one sure way to solve it, pre-K for at-risk 4-year-olds and reducing class size in the early grades, kindergarten through grade 3. This approach is recognized by the RAND Institute and so many other studies. We have done that in North Carolina. This will effectively eliminate the achievement gap both along racial lines and county lines. But we have to finish the job – we have to make sure it's in the budget next year and the year after and the year after.

We are the only state in the United States that raised revenue in 2001 and put over \$1 billion out of the budget that year. That put us at the end of the curve and got us in a manageable position. It would have been much easier just to do what we have always



By Gov. Michael F. Easley

done: you hit that 10-year cycle and have a bad year, so you put on the brakes, maintain the status quo and wait for the economy to get better. But we did not do that. We have been very deliberate in each budget item that we cut and did not cut, especially in rural North Carolina. Our strategy is about progress.

First, there is no rural economic development without health care. The strategy continues to be no cuts that affect access to health care in rural counties.

Second, it means protecting the environment. That is so much of our economy. We did that with our clean smokestacks legislation. It's become a national model. And it means nearly doubling the Clean Water Trust Fund in tough budget times.

Third, it means developing roads and infrastructure. Many projects for rural areas are going to be done in '03 and '04. You are going to see so many of those orange cones on the side of the road you are going to think you are back in drivers' training.

We won the fight this year to hold on to \$276 million in flood money that will be used for homes, schools, bridges and roads in the east, where they are still trying to recover from that disaster.

And we have in place the Golden Leaf Foundation so that we have more flexibility outside the legislative process.

Our story in North Carolina overall is a successful one. But let us never forget that nearly 1 million people in this state wake up every morning in poverty and nearly a third of them are children, and most are rural. You and I are committed to changing that. And we cannot wait for a convenient economy to do that. We have to make our investments now. North Carolina has to be the best. We can accept nothing less. You can accept nothing less.

From a Governor's perch, I see one more year of shortfalls, even as we balance the budget based on zero growth projections. But we have accomplished too much to slow down now. I need your help, North Carolina needs your help.

Excerpted from a keynote address Gov. Easley delivered Oct. 30 at the Rural Partners Forum of the North Carolina Rural Center.

A friendly spirit

When everyone would gather at my parents' house on holidays, we would exchange funny stories about our childhood and laugh for hours. It was my mother's job to prepare the food and tell embarrassing stories to our spouses. The whole time my dad, Sylvester Lane, would be in his room with the door open so he could hear. Although he never joined in, you could see his happiness through his smiles.

But the story I want to tell is that of the morning when he passed away. My sister called to tell me that I needed to go see Dad at the nursing home at 8 a.m., which I considered to be an early hour, since I didn't get home from work until 1 a.m. I said, "Yes, Brenda, I know." She did not tell me he was dying.

She called several more times, so I decided to go. When I got there he had just passed away. Upon arriving back home, I checked my "Caller ID" to see who had called while I was gone. On my ID the following showed up:

Sylvester Lane
Sunrise Nursing Home
###-#### (the phone number at the time)

The date and time of the call was when he passed away. For a brief moment, everything was still and I was numbed.

"Caller ID" displays the name of the person who has that phone's number listed in his or her name. So I called the nursing home to see if they called me, or if they had the technology to enter the patient's name when patients call their families. The answer was no.

In disbelief, I called the phone company to ask how could this be, since Dad had no phone in his room. The phone company transferred me to five different people, each asking me to repeat my story.

After I hung up, everything became still again, but this time I felt calm.

Jacqueline Lane Carr
Kenansville
Tri-County EMC

Stress relief

I enjoy reading Carolina Country each month. I nearly cracked my side reading all the "You Think That Was Dumb?" stories [November 2002]. I even recalled some of the dumb things I've done. Thanks for giving me something to laugh about at the end of a stressful day.

Angella Coleman
Kittrell
Wake EMC

Unwanted: snake strawberry

Does anyone know the best way to get rid of the wild "snake" strawberry runners that are taking over my yard! I have used weed and feed. Nothing has helped.

Jamie Jones
2560 10th Ave. Pl. NE
Hickory, NC 28601

Correction: Stindt Photographics



The June 2002 magazine failed to credit properly most of the pictures of children at Pitt County Memorial Hospital. They were photos by Henry Stindt of Stindt Photographics.

Correction: Bob Dole

An article in November's issue, "American's Oldest Veteran," incorrectly describes Bob Dole as a former vice president. Although Senator Dole was President Ford's vice presidential running mate in 1976, the ticket lost to Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale. In 1996, Bob Dole was the Republican presidential nominee. At no time was Bob Dole ever vice president of the United States.

Bob Bethard
Candler
Haywood EMC

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Elvis Presley's North Carolina kin

Elvis Presley's ancestors came from North Carolina. In fact, his great-great-great-great grandfather, Tunis Hood, is buried in Mint Hill, Mecklenburg County, off of NC 51, near Hoodridge Road. Tunis Hood lived at the intersection of Idlewild Road and NC 51, which is now called Hood Crossroads.

I am also a direct descendant of Tunis Hood, which would make Elvis my sixth cousin.

Minnie Mae Hood, the grandmother of Elvis, is a direct descendant of Tunis Hood. She married Jesse Presley, who is a distant cousin of President Jimmy Carter. Also, Tunis Hood's wife, Elizabeth, is related to Abraham Lincoln. Seems like Elvis was born with greatness in his blood.

The original Hood family came from Holland to New Amsterdam (New York City) in the late 1600s. The family moved to the Shenandoah Valley when Tunis was a boy, and they became Quakers. Tunis moved to Mecklenburg County in 1795. He became the third largest land owner in the county, and was a county commissioner for several years. His family was neighbors with Andrew Jackson, and knew John Springs and Thomas Polk, the other large land owners of Mecklenburg County.

Mint Hill fought to save the cemetery where Tunis Hood is buried. The land around it has been developed with a new school, and more construction is going on in the area.

Maybe one day, Elvis fans can visit his ancestor's gravesite to pay their respects to Elvis, because without Tunis Hood, there would be no Elvis.

Rustee Lane
Mint Hill



One potato, two potato, 3½ pounds each

I couldn't resist sending in this photograph of some of the potatoes I recently grew. The first potato I dug was one of the larger ones. I couldn't believe my eyes: a 3½ pound sweet potato! I got busy and dug the rest of them from 20 hills. I ended with 2½ bushels. My brother and nephew took them to work to show them off. Sweet potato pie! I can't wait!

Joseph Boyd
Bath-Pinetown area
Tideland EMC



Made in the shade

"My daughter, Mattie Lynn Hepner, has 'made in the shade.' I am on chemotherapy and seriously ill, and she gives me such pleasure."

Mary Jo Bennett
Stanley

Sharecroppers

I grew up on a farm in rural Robeson County. We were sharecroppers under my father's daddy. There were five of us kids, and we all grew up hoeing tobacco, cotton and corn, and always grew all the vegetables for the winter. We finished out the year putting in tobacco, picking cotton and whatever else it took to survive in the 1950s and 1960s on the farm.

My two brothers went on to become crop dusters with airplanes. My baby brother, who lives here in Sampson County near me, was over at my home this past August, and while out surveying my garden he noticed that my banana trees were sharecropping with June bugs. He laughed at how they were all lined up in neat rows, just eating away the leaves. I had just been out in the backyard the evening before, and they had eaten this much overnight.

Needless to say I did not laugh, because I had worked so hard to get my banana trees to grow and attempt to produce bananas this year. So I had to put a stop to the sharecropping in my backyard.

Brenda Kay and Elbie Powers
Sampson County
South River EMC



That magic moment



I took this photo as a college student by default, long before digital cameras and easy computerized adjustments could be made to a photo. My older brother, an amateur photographer, was home from college the same time I was. He and his girlfriend came over and went into our music room, where our new love seat sat beside the piano. Sliding the two, large, old-fashioned sliding doors shut, he told us (his five sisters) to "stay out."

"They sure are quiet in there," I thought a while later. I would have loved to peek in or put my ear to those doors to listen, but as the older sister, I refrained. But being bored and a bit mischievous, I spied his camera and had an idea. Sneaking up to the doors, I carefully put the lens of his camera up against the keyhole and snapped a picture. The flash went off, and I suddenly realized that the flash didn't do a bit of good up against the door. I felt guilty to waste some of his precious film. I quietly put the camera back, wondering if anyone had noticed. But all was quiet.

About a month later my brother mentioned some mysterious picture he had gotten back. By this time I had forgotten about using his camera. He showed me the strange photo. There in the middle of a dark background was the perfect shape of a tiny keyhole and in the keyhole was a couple sitting close together on a love seat. It was so tiny, but recognizable.

I couldn't believe my eyes, and neither could he, after I explained just what I had done. Without knowing it, I had captured the very moment that my brother was giving his new fiancé her engagement ring. Perhaps it was a bit blurry, but in my mind it was the greatest masterpiece ever.

Eileen Penner
Harmony
Energy United



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| 20 | --- | --- | 9.53 | 9.10 | 14.65 | 13.56 | 23.18 | 21.00 |
| 21 | --- | --- | 9.53 | 9.10 | 14.65 | 13.56 | 23.18 | 21.00 |
| 22 | --- | --- | 9.53 | 9.10 | 14.65 | 13.56 | 23.18 | 21.00 |
| 23 | --- | --- | 9.53 | 9.10 | 14.65 | 13.56 | 23.18 | 21.00 |
| 24 | --- | --- | 9.53 | 9.10 | 14.65 | 13.56 | 23.18 | 21.00 |
| 25 | --- | --- | 9.53 | 9.10 | 14.65 | 13.56 | 23.18 | 21.00 |
| 26 | --- | --- | 9.53 | 9.18 | 14.65 | 13.78 | 23.18 | 21.43 |
| 27 | --- | --- | 9.62 | 9.18 | 14.87 | 13.78 | 23.62 | 21.43 |
| 28 | --- | --- | 9.62 | 9.18 | 14.87 | 13.78 | 23.62 | 21.43 |
| 29 | --- | --- | 9.62 | 9.18 | 14.87 | 13.78 | 23.62 | 21.43 |
| 30 | --- | --- | 9.62 | 9.18 | 14.87 | 13.78 | 23.62 | 21.43 |
| 31 | --- | --- | 9.62 | 9.18 | 14.87 | 13.78 | 23.62 | 21.43 |
| 32 | --- | --- | 9.62 | 9.18 | 14.87 | 13.78 | 23.62 | 21.43 |
| 33 | --- | --- | 9.62 | 9.18 | 14.87 | 13.78 | 23.62 | 21.43 |
| 34 | --- | --- | 9.71 | 9.18 | 15.09 | 13.78 | 24.06 | 21.43 |
| 35 | --- | --- | 9.71 | 9.27 | 15.09 | 14.00 | 24.06 | 21.87 |
| 36 | --- | --- | 9.71 | 9.36 | 15.09 | 14.21 | 24.06 | 22.31 |
| 37 | --- | --- | 9.71 | 9.45 | 15.09 | 14.43 | 24.06 | 22.75 |
| 38 | --- | --- | 9.80 | 9.53 | 15.31 | 14.65 | 24.50 | 23.18 |
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| 42 | --- | --- | 10.32 | 10.15 | 16.62 | 16.18 | 27.12 | 26.25 |
| 43 | --- | --- | 10.50 | 10.32 | 17.06 | 16.62 | 28.00 | 27.12 |
| 44 | --- | --- | 10.67 | 10.50 | 17.50 | 17.06 | 28.87 | 28.00 |
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| 50 | --- | --- | 13.65 | 12.07 | 24.93 | 21.00 | 43.75 | 35.87 |
| 51 | --- | --- | 14.35 | 12.42 | 26.68 | 21.87 | 47.25 | 37.62 |
| 52 | --- | --- | 14.96 | 12.77 | 28.21 | 22.75 | 50.31 | 39.37 |
| 53 | --- | --- | 15.66 | 13.12 | 29.96 | 23.62 | 53.81 | 41.12 |
| 54 | --- | --- | 16.45 | 13.65 | 31.93 | 24.93 | 57.75 | 43.75 |
| 55 | --- | --- | 17.41 | 14.17 | 34.34 | 26.25 | 62.56 | 46.37 |
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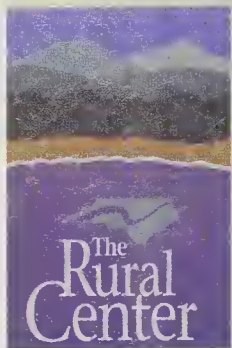
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\$100 million loan program aimed at rural small business



The North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center and state banks have begun a program to make \$100 million in loans available to small businesses throughout the state.

Rural Center chairman Kelly King, who also heads the BB&T bank, cited an urgency to act on behalf of North Carolina workers – 63,000 last year alone – who lost their manufacturing and textile jobs in the wake of hundreds of plant closings.

“North Carolina has thousands of talented entrepreneurs who have the potential for growing small businesses and creating jobs this state so desperately needs,” said King. “We believe the Capital Access Program will help these business men and women get the financing they need to start and grow their firms.” King said the program will be available in all 100 counties of the state.

The Capital Access Program uses a special reserve fund that enables banks to make loans with a strong potential for success, but with a slightly higher level of risk than their guidelines generally allow. The fund is capitalized by a \$3.4 million grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation; a \$400,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission and \$200,000 from the Rural Center.

The new Capital Access Program is built on a highly successful program operated by the center between 1994 and July 2002. During the initial round of the program, participating banks made \$33.5 million in small business loans to more than 670 businesses over an 8-year period, drawing from a \$1.65 million original investment by the N.C. General Assembly and the U.S. Small Business Administration. The average loan during the first phase was \$50,000.

There are 19 North Carolina banks participating. Member banks include: Bank of America, BB&T, CCB, First Charter Bank, First Citizens Bank, First Federal Savings Bank, First National Bank of Shelby, Lexington State Bank, Little State Bank, Mechanics and Farmers Bank, Macon Savings Bank, Randolph Bank and Trust, RBC Centura Bank, Southern Bank and Trust, SouthTrust Bank of NC, The Community Bank, East Carolina Bank, Fidelity Bank of Asheville.

The N.C. Rural Economic Development Center is a private nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop economic strategies that improve the quality of life in rural North Carolina, with a special focus on individuals with low to moderate incomes and communities with limited resources.

Business people interested in the loan program should contact their lending bank.

Light Lines by Donnaree



“I say this one is too dry for Christmas lights...
...What do y'all think?”

Federal program intends to improve inland flood warnings



Rep. Bob Etheridge

In October, President Bush signed legislation introduced by U.S. Rep. Bob Etheridge (D-Lillington) to develop a system warning communities of the threat of inland flooding associated with hurricanes and tropical storms. The legislation was developed in the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd in 1999.

Etheridge said, “Mark Twain used to say, ‘Everyone talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.’ With this new law, we’re doing something about it. This legislation to develop an accurate flood forecasting system will prevent the kinds of tragic losses that our state suffered during Hurricane Floyd.”

Following Floyd’s flooding and destruction, Etheridge convened hurricane experts, local emergency management officials, scientists at N.C. State University and North Carolina meteorologists for a summit on hurricane forecasting. This group identified the need for a practical warning system to alert inland residents and communities about the potential threat of inland flooding from hurricanes and tropical storms. Of the 56 lives lost due to Hurricane Floyd, 48 were caused by inland flooding. Between 1970 and 1999, 69 percent of deaths during hurricanes and tropical cyclones resulted from inland flooding. In North Carolina, Floyd caused \$3 billion worth of property damage, mostly in inland communities. Last year, Tropical Storm Allison killed more than 50 people in several states across the nation. And most recently, torrential rains have caused major flooding in Texas, killing 12 people.

The act authorizes \$5.75 million over five years for the United States Weather Research Program (USWRP) to improve its ability to forecast inland flooding associated with tropical cyclones and to develop and deploy an inland flood warning index.

Ways to protect your electronic equipment

Temporary power surges can harm your home's electronic equipment, even if there's no thunder or lightning in the forecast. That's because about 80 percent of all temporary power surges are generated from within the home, according to the Leviton Institute.

Some of the common sources of these power surges include household appliances such as air conditioners, washing machines, clothes dryers and refrigerators. But the culprit could also be part of your home office setup – a laser printer or photo copier, for example – or even fluorescent lights.

Whatever the source, temporary power spikes can damage sensitive microprocessors inside computers and peripheral office equipment. They can also cause computer programs to lock up and become corrupted.

How can you protect your home office equipment from these damaging spikes? One way is to install an inexpensive power strip that incorporates a surge protection feature.

Power strips with surge protection typically contain four to seven electrical outlets and are easy to operate. Simply plug your computers, peripherals and other equipment into the power strip, then plug the power strip into a conventional electrical outlet. With that, your protection is in place.

Some of the newer power-strip surge protectors feature additional outlets for plugging in telephone jacks and cable TV connectors. That's because telephone and cable wiring can also carry damaging power surges to electronic equipment.

High-end surge protection devices are also available with a diagnostic light that shows if the electrical wiring in the home has a grounding circuit. Some even have an alarm that sounds if the surge protector is damaged by an extreme power surge.

Still other surge protectors come as wall receptacles. These devices replace standard electrical outlets, and help reduce the messy jumble of wires that results when too many plug-in devices are in use.

When shopping for a surge protector, look for a device that displays the current Underwriters Laboratories (UL) mark relating to transient voltage surge suppressors. This assures you that the product meets the manufacturer's safety standards, as well as all applicable electrical codes.

A typical plug-strip surge protector retails between \$10 and \$40. However, you may want to increase your protection if you have a substantial investment in office equipment, or if you own other expensive electronic equipment, such as a large-screen TV or



Uninterruptible power supply (UPS) units vary in size depending on equipment requirements.

a state-of-the-art home entertainment center.

To protect your entire house against temporary power surges, consider having a qualified electrical contractor install a meter socket surge arrester, or "whole house surge protector," at your electric meter, and indoor and outdoor panel-mounted devices next to the circuit breaker panel.

Contact your electric cooperative for installation instructions for a meter socket surge arrester. Some cooperatives also sell surge protectors.

If it's critical that you maintain a power supply in the event of an outage, you can consider attaching an "uninterruptible power supply" to such equipment as computers, peripherals, data processing equipment, telecommunications and security equipment, even life support equipment. Many UPS units protect equipment against power fluctuations and other disturbances, as well as allowing them to continue running for a period of time after an outage. They run on one or more batteries. UPS units can be as small as a lunch box to nearly the size of two refrigerators.

The Leviton Institute's mission is to help educate consumers about the latest wiring devices and issues relating to home electrical safety. It was formed by the Leviton Manufacturing Company, a producer of home electrical wiring devices.



Surge protectors for electronic equipment and telephones.

Use holiday decorations safely

Before plugging in new or used electrical decorations, carefully inspect each one. Cracked sockets, frayed or bare wiring, and loose connections may cause a serious electric shock or start a fire. Replace damaged items with new UL-listed decorations. And don't overload extension cords. Overloaded cords can easily overheat and start a fire. Make sure to check the markings on your electrical decorations to determine the maximum number of decorative light strings that may be connected together.



Jim's Kids

The power of human connections in Randolph County

Photos by Villa Photography, Asheboro

By Talena Chavis



One of Jim's newest kids is Bradley Hill, of Gold Hill, N.C., who was 15 months old at July's party in Asheboro. Bradley has c

Early 1950s, Jim Bullins of Randolph County watched his younger brother Wesley waste away from a mysterious illness. With no financial resources to pay for medical care, Jim vowed to become a doctor in order to provide help.

"We grew up real poor, farming tobacco," Jim remembers. "There was nothing we could do to help him out—no money, no nothing. So when he

passed away, I decided there had to be some way to make up later in life for what I could not do at that time."

Nearly two decades later, Jim stumbled upon a means of keeping his brother's memory alive by reaching out to others with mental and physical handicaps.

The first party in July

His neighbor's granddaughter, Cindy Staley, born with cerebral palsy

and diagnosed spastic quadriplegic, inspired Jim in his quest to help people with disabilities.

"One day I saw Cindy come to visit and when she got out of that van, she couldn't turn her head or anything, but it seemed like her mother turned her chair around, and she looked at me and I thought, 'Uh, oh, now it's all coming together.'"

That day, Jim Bullins discovered



enital spina bifida and a cleft palate.

that he and Cindy shared birthdays in July. The two decided to throw a joint party. The next year, he and Cindy hosted another party, and the invitation list grew to 70 guests. As time passed, the party continued to take on a life of its own, attracting local media attention, and eventually taking on the theme of "Christmas in July."

Local media carried the story of Jim's unique parties for mentally and

physically handicapped adults and children, affectionately referred to as "Jim's Kids."

In the meantime, Jim's flexible job as a trucker allowed him to work for his kids from the road. While putting in 680-mile weeks for Murrow Furniture Trucking Company of Asheboro, he still managed to visit out-of-state kids and collect donations to fund his parties. His occupation also offered up a whole new media outlet: trucker magazines. "Movin' Out Magazine" and "Truckers News" published stories about this trucker who left donation collection cans in truck stops and displayed a big sign on his tractor-trailer dedicated to improving the lives of disabled kids. Eventually, his campaign caught the attention of People Magazine in 1995 and Tom Brokaw, who brought an NBC TV camera crew to attend a December party in 1998.

Jim laughs when he recalls how fast this thing grew. "Word just got out from coast to coast and that's when I began to wonder—what in the world have I got myself into?"

"We're the only ones that do it"

As the parties grew, so did the popularity of Jim's Kids. Today, Jim's Kids is a nonprofit organization with a two-fold mission:

- To purchase medical equipment that Medicare will not cover, and
- To throw parties for his kids twice a year.

These "kids" comprise 270 adults and children from across the nation. Twelve people attended the first "Christmas in July" party 20 years ago. Currently, his parties draw a crowd of about 300 to 500, including family members and friends of the kids. The parties are held two times throughout the year: a July party that now lasts two days, and a Christmas party held on the second Saturday in December. This year, the party falls on Dec. 14.

"When I started this, I thought it went on everywhere," says Jim. "Then I found out that we're the only ones that do it strictly for handicapped kids and adults." He has entertained a few kids from Canada and even some from as far away as Switzerland.

During the parties, each kid receives a gift tailored to his or her special needs.

"It makes you feel good when you help somebody to get something they really need," says Mary Bullins, Jim's wife. "There are a lot of things, especially for younger children, that Medicare just won't help with and that's where we come in."

The parties typically feature live entertainment by local country and gospel groups: "The Anchormen" of Goldsboro and "Joey and Vicky Holiday" of Nashville, Tenn.

Mary says the parties not only provide the kids with a fun, social outlet, they also help to establish a network of support for the kids and their families. "It works more like a support group for the parents than for the children," says Mary. "It really helps—they learn a lot of short cuts and what works for the kids from sharing information with one another."

Support from the community

To keep Jim's Kids going, Jim relies upon donations from sponsors. All money donated to Jim Kid's goes back into the organization. However, when people donate to Jim's Kids, they don't just give money.

Some donate their time.

About 50 volunteers come from Westside Fire and Rescue. "We sell pizza, popcorn, hot dogs, drinks and all proceeds go back to Jim's Kids," says Steve Barr, who is Westside's lieutenant and Randolph County's fire inspector.

Others donate their property.

A conversation between the Jim's Kids photographer and the local reverend's daughter sparked an idea to hold the parties in the gymnasium of the Liberty Road Baptist Church.

"We met with Jim Bullins," says Rev. Don Ashley. "We walked in the big facility, and I said, 'Can you use it?' He said, 'Yeah, how much would it cost us?' I said, 'How much you got?' He said, 'Nothing.' I said, 'That's how much it'll cost you.'"

Besides donating the free space, Liberty Road also supplies the food for the parties, and decorations for the gym.

The Hampton Inn of Asheboro offers free rooms to out-of-town party guests. A local limousine service provides free rides to the parties. Randolph Electric, the area's Touchstone Energy cooperative, is a regular contributor to

Jim's Kids and knows all the local people who depend on a steady electrical supply for such life support systems as Cindy Staley's feeding pump.

Becoming a Jim's Kid

Jim meets most of his kids on his own, but some have contacted him—such as his newest kid, 3-year-old Michael Hanson. Michael's adopted mother, Cynthia Hanson, heard about Jim's Kids from church. "We called Jim and I said I would like for you to meet my son. There is nothing we're asking for or needing—I just want to be part of your network." Michael's condition—arthrogryposis multiplex congenita—affects his joints and limits the range of motion in his fingers, hands, ankles and legs.

Cynthia mentioned that her son's therapist recommended the pedaling motion of a bicycle to try and improve the movement of his knees, hips and feet.

"Unfortunately," says Cynthia. "Michael's special needs required a certain type of bicycle that was very expensive. All Jim said was, 'Where do you get it?'"

Jim surprised the mother and son with the special bike at a gospel concert on Valentine's Day. "She came on stage and told us what she needed," Jim remembers. "So while she was talking to us, we had some other folks seat him on it and push him out onto the stage."

Some of Jim's kids are older than he is. Every week he visits residents of the Asheboro Health and Rehabilitation Center, where Ella Staley and Louise York



Fletcher Fox, of Asheboro, always gets emotional when he sees Jim.

are among Jim's oldest kids. "I met him in a store one day, about ten years ago," Louise York remembers. "And he was telling me about Jim's Kids, inviting me to join. I told him I had a friend named Ella, so we both joined right after that." The rehab center group has grown to include Fletcher Fox, Jewell Bean, Joyce Lerch, Sarah Hutchins and others. And Jim makes sure these kids can attend the parties by providing transportation in special vans. Ella Staley is the "leader of the pack" and makes sure the others know when events are coming.

The kid from Carolina Country

Carolina Country magazine also introduced Jim to a new kid—Onie Frances Rogerson. Back in April, the magazine ran a letter by Onie Frances, who lives in Blounts Creek. As a mem-

ber of Randolph Electric, Jim is a fan of Carolina Country. He saw the letter and contacted the magazine staff in order to get in touch with her. Jim wrote to Onie and invited her to the "Christmas in July" party. He also gave her a check for \$150 since in her letter she wrote, "I don't work no job, so I don't make no money" even though she helps her family by cooking, cleaning house, washing dishes and bringing in wood.

Her first letter to Jim included a thank-you card that read: "Thank you all for the letter and money you sent me. I do care about everybody on this Earth. I wish I could help everybody out and I love everybody you are all special to me. Take care and God Bless You All. Love, Onie Frances Rogerson."

It's kids like Onie Frances that have made Jim pour his heart and soul into Jim's Kids, and for the last three years, he's been working full time at it.

"I think I have as much fun doing it for them as they do having it done for them," he says. "It's just something special that makes you feel good knowing that you have so many friends and support out here that help you make it all happen."

To get involved

Jim's Kids is a nonprofit organization, which means all donations are tax-deductible. If you would like to make a donation or learn more about Jim's Kids, you can reach Jim Bullins at (336) 629-1973 or write: 2262-4 Race Track Road, Sophia, NC 27350-8900.

Talena Chavis worked with Carolina Country as a freelance writer earlier this year.



Jim learned about Onie Frances Rogerson when she wrote to Carolina Country, the magazine that North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives send to their members. Shown at the Asheboro party are Randolph Electric's general manager Dale Lambert (left) and member and public relations manager Dave Rowe (right).



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How do they make



those boats, anyway?

COASTAL NORTH CAROLINA'S LEGENDARY BOATBUILDING TRADITION SHINES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

BY MIKE BRADLEY
PHOTOS BY SCOTT TAYLOR

You can't discuss the economy in the eastern counties of North Carolina without talking about the maritime industry of boatbuilders, marinas, boat repair, boat restoration and marine construction. Statewide, these businesses provide over 20,000 jobs, the majority in the rural counties of the state served by North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives.

Boatbuilding is one of the first recognized trades in the state. It is more traditional than tobacco or textiles along our coast. It is a trade where long-established family businesses and newly created corporate brands sell their products locally, nationally and internationally. These builders utilize building techniques that vary from the "old" way of plank-on-frame to modern vacuum infusion fiberglass technologies.

The business of boatbuilding requires a critical understanding of boaters, boating, boat construction and regulations — lots of regulations. Add facility construction codes, changing air quality regulations, fire codes, OSHA safety rules, Coast Guard testing requirements, employee training, production changes, new technology, fiscal management, cost-effective energy decisions, and you have a glimpse of the business complexity.

Donnie Jones, of Jones Brothers Marine in Morehead City, has been tackling these complicated issues for the past two years. Jones has been the pusher, puller and sometimes magician for the company's new boatbuilding facility. It hasn't been an easy road. Building a new building for the construction of fiberglass boats requires federal, state, county and city oversight - often on both the boat and the buildings involved. Following the guidelines and rules is a series of starts and stops, often demanding financial and technical resources before they are affordable or available.

Jones Brothers' boats are 16 to 23-foot fiberglass flat-bottomed skiffs (Bateau) and Vee Hull (Cape Fisherman) designed for the coastal waters of the east coast and surrounding sounds and waterways. The demand for new boats has required a new production facility.

Designing a new boatbuilding facility that simultaneously produces boats and cash flow requires abundant research on cost-effective, energy-frugal, regulatory-compliant air management systems. And that is just the start. It

also begs a number of decisions related to equipment used in fiberglass boat production, and it encourages project management and innovative financing.

HELP FROM THE TOUCHSTONE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Jones will be the first to say that it is not done yet, but he can point to a number of building decisions that point in that direction. Importantly, he contacted Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative. Carteret-Craven played a critical part in Jones Brothers new facility by providing assistance with an interest-free economic development loan made available through a program developed in conjunction with the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation. This allowed the company to step up their timetable for the new facility by several years. Because of this, Jones Brothers will soon double its employee base. In addition to the original loan, the Cooperative provided grant-writing assistance to the Town of Morehead City so that water lines could be run to the site.

On the energy-saving side, the new Jones Brothers facility utilizes innovative design and a number of new technologies. One is the energy efficient, in-the-floor hot water heat transfer method utilizing Voyager high efficiency hot water systems feeding a Wirsbo in-floor heat-transfer package. These systems create a consistent ambient temperature that is critical in fiberglass construction. Temperature controls the quality of the product - and cost-effective quality provides more money to bottom line.

There a couple of other energy efficient designs built into this facility which will not only conserve energy but reduce long-term energy costs. Adequate lighting is critical to quality boatbuilding. Mold preparation, hull construction, painting, quality control and outfitting all require different quality of light, and for builders the size of Jones Brothers, the same building area requires different light conditions depending on the stage of the boat construction. Jones Brothers installed lighting adjustments that can control whole banks or individual lights - keeping the light "on" where it is needed and "off" where adequate with light from building-wide skylights. They also have designed a "kick-in" generator that will (when completed) monitor the electricity being used and come on when the amperage

Continued ▶

exceeds a critical peak load level, saving electrical usage fees.

One of the biggest constraints in fiberglass boatbuilding is the balance between EPA air quality regulations and OSHA and EPA employee safety constraints. Again, Donnie Jones found a combination of solutions that meets the regulatory requirements and provides innovative cost controls at the same time. One step taken is the use of low styrene resins and state-of-the-art resin applications systems. Another is the innovative adoption of electronic

and mechanical controls for the building's air quality control systems. The building utilizes the Frees Corporation's TEAMS (Total Environmental Air Management Systems) exhaust airflow technology for resin and gel coat spray bays of the building. Unlike typical installations, however, Jones has installed cost-efficient resin application flow switches that

control variable speed exhaust motors and exhaust dampers, permitting one or more bays to be isolated automatically.

When asked how he managed to get the construction, new technologies and advanced energy saving components to come together, Donnie Jones says: "I learned from mistakes we and other builders have made in the past and researched what was working for facilities using new technologies. I also knew the kind of cost-constraints we had to work with and factored them in – and I relied like heck on professionals like Craig Conrad and Gary Zajac of the Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative, Tom Jones of P.T. Jones Electrical and Phil McMillian of Frees who took what we envisioned and made it work."

It is working. The Bateau and the Cape Fisherman boats each have a strong following among fishing and recreational boaters, who are the company's best salespeople. The boats have a range of colors, sizes and layouts with customer innovations a constant.

Jones Brothers is just one of over 100 boatbuilders in North Carolina and one of the lines of boats sold by over 400 boat dealers in the state. But, Jones Brothers is a more than customer for Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative; it is a growing business partner.



Donnie Jones, president of Jones Brothers Marine in Morehead City, says his Touchstone Energy cooperative helped his business step up its development schedule by several years. He expects to double his workforce soon.



Below: A view of a Bateau 220 fiberglass flat-bottomed skiff. Shown are Jones Brothers Marine president Donnie Jones (left) and author Mike Bradley, who is director of the statewide Marine Trades Services for the Small Business and Technology Development Center in Beaufort.

ABOVE: (Clockwise from top left)

Bryan Gray installs gunwales in a Bateau skiff.

Randy Craft makes final engine installation adjustments.

Tim Core prepares to inject foam flotation in Bateau 220 skiff.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT NORTH CAROLINA'S MARINE TRADES AND BOATING RESOURCES, SEE THE WEB SITE WWW.NCWATERWAYS.COM

“Do your thing as long as possible, then let them help.”

And other advice for aging gracefully

All of us can look forward to growing older. As far as I can tell, older people are smarter than younger ones, so that's one aspect of aging we all can enjoy, I suspect. Evidently, there are other joys of aging, as many of you reported in your “Advice for Getting Older” submissions for this month's “Nothing Could Be Finer” series. For example, we can look forward to telling other people what to do, and to seeing other people graciously do things for us. Among the often-repeated advice you have are suggestions to take care of our health and to be kind to others.

Thanks to everyone who sent us something. These pages show the submissions selected by the judges. Look for our other monthly themes on page 19.

— Michael E.C. Gery



Look at life like you look at cars

My advice for getting older and aging gracefully is similar to my advice on cars:

1. Occasionally check out the new models.
Talk with young people often to keep up with the latest. Stay in touch, and you won't feel ancient. Just look and listen; you don't have to buy.
2. Use only top-grade fuel.
For optimum performance, eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, drink lots of pure water and resist junk food (it will clog your engine).
3. New cars look good, but they don't always provide the best ride.
Don't envy youth. The body may be sleek and new, but the road it travels is filled with bumps, potholes and wrecks. Your model may be older, but you've learned how to drive and make the ride much smoother. Hindsight is 20-20.
4. Refer to the owner's manual often.
Continue to learn all you can about yourself. Know what your talents and abilities are and use them to help others.
5. A classic is in a league of its own.
Wake up every day thankful that you've been around a while, because they don't make them like they used to.

Wanda F. Lee
Fayetteville
South River EMC

Continued on page 18.

Pay attention to others

I thought I'd be old at 65, but I wasn't. I'm over 80, and I'm still not old. I've gained some weight since I was 25, but I ate a lot since then. I have aches and pains and take a lot of medicine, but that's not old age, my body just has some adjusting to do. I don't see well, but my glasses might need washing.

As long as people can do for themselves, I think they should. You may not get the floor swept one day, but that can wait. No one will come in and say anything about it, because they'll feel guilty for not doing it for you. Keep a good sense of humor; some things that happen really are funny.

Don't expect your family to make you the center of attention. Do your thing as long as possible, then let them help. As you get older you have more time. Don't use it feeling sorry for yourself. Help somebody. You can always call someone just to say hello. There's a lot out there that needs to be done.

My sister and I are called "the hugging ladies" at one of the local nursing homes we visit. We hug everyone and tell them we love them. We get a lot of smiles and hugs ourselves.

We can't help the passing of time, but there's plenty we can do that lets someone know we've passed this way.

For years I've sent my children and each one in their families a birthday card with a dollar, and I always say, "I love you." You would think after great-grandchildren and great-great ones, that the older ones wouldn't care, but they do – and still look forward to getting their cards.

Just think of the sick and lonely people we could brighten days for. Send that card or letter.

Lucille Haywood
Rockingham
Pee Dee EMC

Laugh, tell tales, treat people right

I don't know about gracefully, but it has been a good 93 years. I am a firm believer in the saying, "Laughter is the best medicine."

When I moved back to my hometown and started a small used car business, it became a place where old friends gathered to pass the time and tell tall tales. Laughter reigned supreme.

I believe in treating people right and giving a helping hand. And since I retired last year, I go to the grill every morning to catch up on the news

and my sisters and brothers and most of my friends. I have a positive attitude and keep going. I can't do anything without the help of my family. When I visit with him at home and in

Elmon McLamb
Salemberg
South River EMC

Enjoy being 12

Whether you're 1 or 100, you know about getting older. People have problems with getting older or wanting to get old too fast.

If you're a person (usually a kid) who wants to get older too fast, don't be in such a hurry. I can say a lot about wanting to get older too fast, because I used to want to, but I thought long and hard about it, and I decided to take life as it is. I'll have my time to grow up. But right now I'm a kid, and I have to face the facts.

Just think about how hard a grown-up has to work to pay bills and put food on the table. Plus, most grown-ups have kids, and that costs about twice as much, because they have to eat and wear clothes. You don't realize how much a grown-up has to go through.

I'm only 12, but I imagine it's hard to work. You think it's hard work to go to school for six hours, but just imagine being cooped up in an office or working at a job where sweat pours off of you.

All I'm trying to say is, you only get to be a kid once, so don't blow it on dreaming about getting older.

Jessica Brub, 12
Bostic
Rutherford EMC

Plan ahead

While some of us don't want to acknowledge it, every day we are getting older. So accept the fact that this is life. Getting old gracefully is a hard thing to do without planning ahead. The first thing I would suggest is to look forward to each and every day as a blessing from God.

To enjoy life, you must love and appreciate people. Make friends in your early life, and they will be a treasure in later years. To have friends you must be one – do a good deed each day.

While you are working, you must have other interests. When you retire, life is not over. You must have hobbies, things you love to do. These could be reading a good book, fishing, golfing, woodworking or anything you enjoy. Just don't sit down and do nothing. This will not work.

I, myself, like all church activities. Also, I like to read, work crossword puzzles in the paper and play golf. Each spring, I enter the senior games played at Winston-Salem. Any event you win a medal in, you can compete at the state level at Raleigh in the fall. Every other year there is a national event. I haven't gotten that far yet, but who knows? I've enjoyed every minute of the games and have met some great people. And that is life!

John W. Key, 77
Pilot Mountain
Surry-Yadkin EMC



Ethan Baker and Kayla Handy

Help younger people

This picture is of my nephew Ethan Baker of Traphill and my niece Kayla Handy of Moravian Falls. This was taken in March 1996 at Ethan's 2nd birthday party. Kayla turned 2 six days later. Ethan must have been giving Kayla some advice on how to handle the Terrible Twos.

*Barbara Johnson
Traphill
Surry-Yadkin EMC*

Go wild

How can we age gracefully?
We don't!

You read that obituary every morning and if you're not in it—go hog wild.

When you get old, you can do crazy things and get away with it, like you couldn't do if you were younger. Also, hang out with young people (if they'll let you.)

Keep those drivers licenses, and run the roads.

Visit relatives, go to casinos, play bingo, join the Moose and go in for a lemonade. Or go to Karaoke. Then when you get some time, do some good for someone less fortunate than you. And never, never let the kids say, "Time to settle down, Grandma." Let them wonder where you are at 11 o'clock.

*Candy Jones, 66
Roseboro
South River EMC*

Savor every minute

The secret to growing old gracefully is not to. Old is a word, a state of mind, not a date on a birth certificate.

Grow to be wiser, more understanding, more aware of the world around you. Appreciate the fact that not everyone gets to see their children grow up or grandchildren born. Not everyone gets another birthday, another sunrise, another chance. Treat every day as if it were your last (it could be). The things you enjoyed when you were younger are just as good the second time around. The county fair on opening night, the changing colors of the leaves on the Blue Ridge Parkway, the first snow of the year.

Throw your arms around the world and savor every minute. Never let the opportunity pass to say I love you (and mean it), or I'm sorry (when you are). Laugh as much as you can, hug as much as you're allowed.

Try not to let life pass you by. It's one of God's greatest gifts.

*Carol Grubbs
Linwood
EnergyUnited*

SEND us your best. Earn \$50.

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

February 2003

"My Favorite Technology"
Kids writing only. Anyone under age 18.
Deadline: Dec. 15

March 2003

"My Tips for Good Gardening"
Tell us the technique that makes your garden grow.
Deadline: Jan. 15

April 2003

"Best North Carolino Vocation — Off the Beaten Path"
Where, why and send pictures.
Deadline: Feb. 15

May 2003

"We Actually Sow a Wild. . ."
Tell us about what you sow in the North Carolino wilderness.
Deadline: March 15

June 2003

"The Finest Food in North Carolina"
If you had to pick one North Carolino specialty, what would it be and why?
Deadline: April 15

July 2003

"Why I Went Back to School"
What was your most meaningful adult education experience?
Deadline: May 15

August 2003

"The Funniest Story I Ever Heard"
True, or not so true.
Deadline: June 15

September 2003

"My Favorite Photo"
Our annual photo gallery of North Carolino people and places.
Deadline: July 15

October 2003

"Why I Like My Electric Cooperative"
Is a cooperative different than other utilities?
Deadline: August 15

November 2003

"The Finest Neighbor I Ever Knew"
Tell us why and send a photo.
Deadline: Sept. 15

December 2003

"How to Live a Long and Happy Life"
Do you know an older person who sets a good example for staying healthy and happy? Send a photo, too.
Deadline: Oct. 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mail or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616. Or by e-mail: carolino.country@ncemcs.com. Or through the Web site: www.carolinocountry.com



For more information about the 4-H Youth Development Program, contact your local Cooperative Extension office or the state 4-H office at (919) 515-3242; mailing address: NCSU Box 7606, Raleigh, NC, 27695-7606.

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EMCs & 4-H tee off for youth

Over 100 golfers gathered at Grandover Golf Resort & Conference Center in Greensboro on Saturday, October 5, 2002, for the 6th Annual EMC State 4-H Clover Classic to raise funds for North Carolina's 4-H Youth Development program. This year, 11 county 4-H programs in partnership with Touchstone Energy cooperatives held local tournaments that culminated in this statewide tournament, sponsored by the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC).

After a round of golf, the golfers and their guests relaxed and shopped the silent auction at an awards dinner at Grandover Resort in Greensboro. Proceeds will go towards teen programs, the Eastern 4-H Environmental Education Conference Center, located in Tyrrell County, and other awards programs that provide recognition, travel opportunities, and scholarships to 4-H members.

"Grand patron" for the EMC State 4-H Clover Classic was the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation. "Golf patrons" included regional cooperatives that partnered in local tournaments and corporate sponsors: Jones-Onslow EMC, Halifax EMC, South River EMC, Pitt-Greene EMC, Central EMC, Albemarle EMC, Piedmont EMC, Edgecombe-Martin EMC, Union EMC and Wake EMC. Other "golf patrons" included Grant Thornton, GDS Associates, Wachovia, Highwoods Properties, Deloitte & Touche, Franklin Street Trust, NC 4-H Development Fund, North Carolina State University College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, and the NC Cooperative Extension Service.

The 11 local tournaments have raised over \$68,000 this year to help fund programs for the local counties. Counties use this money to help fund intra-state exchanges, offset project and curriculum costs, scholarships for camp, and many other programmatic needs. The counties participating in tournaments included Onslow, Halifax, Sampson, Harnett, Cumberland, Pitt, Greene, Lee, Pasquotank, Union, Warren, Orange, Person, Edgecombe, Vance, Granville and Franklin. The first local tournament began over 12 years ago and these have become very successful partnerships and major fundraisers for local 4-H programs.

The North Carolina 4-H Youth Development program serves over 200,000 youth, ages 5-19, in North Carolina and utilizes over 20,000 adult volunteers annually. Local 4-H programs are supported with resources from the Cooperative Extension Service within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University and North Carolina A & T State University. 4-H has offices in all 100 counties plus the Cherokee Reservation.

For more information about the 4-H Youth Development Program, contact your local Cooperative Extension office or the state 4-H office at (919) 515-3242; mailing address: NCSU Box 7606, Raleigh, NC, 27695-7606.



MOUNTAIN PETS IN A *weekly datebook*

The Watauga Humane Society has published a 2003 appointment calendar containing photographs and stories of local pets, plus pet service information and holidays.

The appointment calendar measures 5½ by 8½ inches and shows a week's appointments on a two-page spread.

Professional photographer Freddie Georgia, a Watauga County resident in Vilas, directed the publication in coordination with Watauga Humane Society president Dee Dundon. The duo-tone photos include Freddie Georgia's plus submissions by pet owners.

The Watauga Humane Society is very active and known to have one of the highest adoption rates in the nation.

The datebooks cost \$17.50 (includes shipping) and must be prepaid. Make check or money order payable to Watauga Humane Society. Contact: Watauga Humane Society, c/o Jan Watson, treasurer, 196 Paul Critcher Dr., Boone, NC 28607. Phone: (828) 264-1743 E-mail: jan@apptechnc.net or Freddie Georgia 427 Russell Beach Rd., Vilas, NC 28692 (freddiefoto@hotmail.com)



WATAUGA HUMANE SOCIETY
2003
Date Book



CAROLINA CREATIONS

This shop in New Bern sells fine art and contemporary crafts, including prints, paintings, mugs, clocks, pottery, wooden items and glassware. The original watercolor print "Confluence," by Janet Francoeur, is available in two sizes. Unframed 8-inch by 16-inch print is \$26. Unframed 20-inch by 33-inch is \$85.

Carolina Creations Phone & Fax (252) 633-4369
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New Bern, NC 28560



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Opal's Gift Baskets delivers to nearby areas and will ship across North Carolina. Theme baskets for anniversaries, birthdays, sports fans and getting well. Bath and body collections include baskets for men. "Santa's Sleigh" is filled with mustard, beef log, shrimp and crab spread, caviar crackers, Netherlands coffee, liqueur cake and Christmas tea bags. \$52. "Gourmet Boat Basket" includes chocolate chip cookies, meats, cheese, crackers, mustard, coffee, cider and chocolate. \$35.

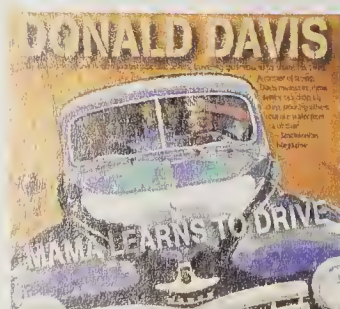
Opal's Gift Baskets
312 Bright Ave.
Bessemer City, NC 28016
(704) 865 9475
www.opalsgiftbaskcts.com



STORIES FOR KIDS & KIN

"You're going to kill us all!" That's what storyteller Donald Davis recalls his little brother shouting in Davis' new CD, "Mama Learns To Drive." With more than 20 recordings, the FMC member has headlined storytelling festivals across the state. He centers his humorous tales on rural America. The new CD also includes "Aunt Esther Saves A Pumpkin," "Pumpkins and Carrots" and "Doobies." Total running time: 45 minutes. \$14.95.

Donald Davis
CD "Mama Learns To Drive"
FMC member
(704) 372-1111
Available August 1, 2002



N.C. COASTAL FEDERATION

The North Carolina Coastal Federation works with citizens to protect and preserve our beaches, sounds, rivers and creeks. By joining NCCF, you receive membership benefits such as the quarterly Coastal Review, invitations to workshops and programs, full privileges in the organization's Nature Library, gift shop discounts, and the annual State of the Coast Report. For donations of \$100 and up, add a NCCF T-shirt. Membership starts at \$15 (students and others on limited incomes).

North Carolina Coastal Federation
3609 Highway 24
Newport, NC 28570
(800) 232-6210
www.nccoast.org



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Burt's Bees, based in Durham, sells earth-friendly, personal care products made from herbs and botanicals. The company's Healthy Treatment Collection includes: Royal Jelly Eye Cream, Evening Primrose Overnight Crème, Pore-Refining Mask and Shea Butter Decollete Crème, with ingredients such as peppermint, lemon, comfrey, eucalyptus and cocoa butter. Burt's Bees Marshmallow Vanishing Crème, made with mango butter, rose water, rosemary and calendula, is \$14.

Burt's Bees, Inc.
701 Distribution Drive
Durham, NC 27709
(800) 849-7112
www.burtsbees.com



COCO CARDS

Growing up in Wayne County, Coco Johnsen spent her childhood in foster homes, and at age 12 moved to an orphanage. Part Blackfoot Indian, part African-American, Coco went to Brazil as an exchange student. Today, she's a model and actress with her own set of Bench Warmer trading cards. See her in the movie "Solaris," opening this month with George Clooney. Trading cards come eight to a pack for \$2.49, and are available at hobby shops and specialty stores. Warning: Coco is posed in skimpy bathing suits.

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SKI SPECIALS

North Carolina's ski slopes are offering a slew of specials this season. At Ski Beech starting in January, ladies ski free on Mondays. On Tuesdays, skiers get two lift tickets for the price of one. Ski Beech is in the town of Beech Mountain near Boone, and has 15 slopes and 10 lifts.

Ski Beech
10007 Beach Mountain Parkway
Beech Mountain, NC 28604
(800) 438-2093
www.skibeech.com



A BLUEGRASS CHRISTMAS

Wendy Lewis and Friends' "Christmas Favorites" features acoustic bluegrass and mountain-style music from the Laurel Springs area just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. Bluegrass classic "Christmas Time's A Coming" included, along with other popular holiday tracks such as "Silver Bells," "Silent Night" and "Blue Christmas." Fourteen tracks. CD is \$8.85.

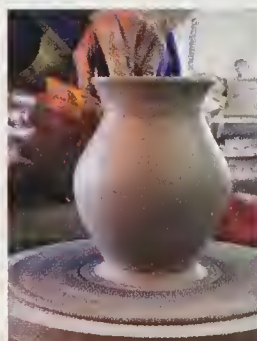
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Folks visiting Seagrove no longer have to locate far-flung pottery stores on their own. Out & About Tours offers trips that visit 10 shops. Included: van pick-up, homemade snacks, cold beverages, historical information about pottery styles and a chance to meet potters. Tours available six days weekly, including holidays. Individuals, \$30 each; 10-14 people, \$26.50 each; 10-14 seniors, \$24 each.

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National Geographic Maps new Southeast Series provides outdoor enthusiasts with trail maps and CD-ROMs based on the latest U.S. Geological Survey. Backpackers, hikers and bikers who want to chart their own path can create custom topographic maps with the new TOPO! CD-ROM software. It enables creation of high-resolution maps, and allows for uploading of GPS routes to handheld receivers. Trail maps are 1-inch to 1.2 mile scale. Maps and CD-ROMs, \$9.95 to \$99.

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(800) 962-1643
www.nationalgeographic.com/maps



OUTER BANKS FUDGE COMPANY

Nags Head shop makes its fudge in copper kettles over an open flame, then pours the creamy concoction by hand. Fudge, cheesecakes, Belgian treats and "the world's first and only Salt Water Fudge." Recipes use less sugar than usual, to avoid a grainy texture. Salt Water Fudge is 8 ounces for \$7.99. Six Oreos covered with Belgian chocolate, \$6.95.

Outer Banks Fudge Company
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Nags Head, NC 27859
(877) 449-8484
www.fudgeman.com



THE HOG HUNDRED

North Carolinians may quibble over what kind of barbecue is best, but they tend to agree on this: Barbecue is not a verb, but a noun to be savored. From his public television shows and book "North Carolina Barbecue: Flavored by Time," Burlington resident Bob Garner has established himself as an authority on barbecue's history. His new book, "Guide to North Carolina Barbecue," lists 100 of his favorite joints across the state. Softcover, 160 pages. \$12.95.

John F. Blair, Publisher
1406 Plaza Drive
Winston-Salem, NC 27103
(800) 222-9796
E-mail: byerly@blairpub.com



A Holiday Bonus

from the Carolina Country staff

Chocolate Sauce

- 2 cups sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cocoa
- 1 stick melted margarine
- 1 can evaporated milk (12 ounces)

Mix sugar and cocoa in a saucepan. Add milk and butter. Boil for 5 minutes. Serve over ice cream or hot fudge cake. You can use this in any recipe that calls for chocolate sauce. Delicious!

Jenny Lloyd

Easier-Than-Pie Egg Custard

- 3 medium to large eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ stick butter or margarine, melted
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 1 large can (12 ounce) evaporated milk
- Cinnamon (optional)

Mix all ingredients in a large bowl, then pour into a 9-inch pan that has been greased and floured lightly. Bake on top rack of oven at 375 degrees for 28-30 minutes. Browns naturally. Delicious warm or cold.

Karen House

Artichoke Dip

- 1 cup real mayonnaise
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup canned artichoke hearts (not marinated)
- 2 tablespoons fresh green onions, chopped

Puree mayonnaise, cheese and artichoke hearts in a blender or food processor. Mix in green onions. Bake in an 8-inch or 9-inch baking dish at 350 degrees for 30 minutes to brown.

Tara Verna

Chicken Taco Dip

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 cup jalapenos or chilies (chopped)
- 1 cup tomatoes (you can use Mexican-seasoned)
- 1 cup corn (frozen or canned)
- 1 cup tortilla chips (16-ounce), cut into large cubes
- 1 cup chicken (cooked and seasoned)

Tortilla Chips

Break up large cold tomatoes (break them up a bit before using) and add jalapenos or chilies (to your own taste). In a bowl, stir over oil until melted. (If you add too much cheese, it will all clump together.) Pour into dish and serve with tortilla chips.

Renee Gannon

Hawaiian Chicken Wings

- 1 large package (4 to 5 pounds) frozen wing drumettes
- 1 cup soy sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter or margarine
- 1 cup brown sugar
- Sprinkle garlic salt or garlic powder

Sprinkle defrosted drumettes with garlic powder or salt. Put in large baking dish. In a separate saucepan, heat soy sauce, butter and sugar together until well blended. Pour warm mixture over the chicken and bake at 400 degrees for 1 hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes, basting every 15 minutes and turning until well done.

Jennifer Hoey

Cranberry Pudding

- 2 cups fresh cranberries, washed
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup walnuts, chopped
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 egg, beaten
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour
- Vanilla ice cream

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter an 8-inch pie plate and place the cranberries in it. Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the sugar with the walnuts and 4 tablespoons of melted butter, and pour this over the cranberries. Combine the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar with the flour, then add the beaten egg and remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and mix well; pour mixture over the berries. Bake 45 minutes. Serve warm with a scoop of ice cream. Serves 6.

Michael Gery

Bruschetta

- Loaf of crusty Italian bread, sliced into 1-inch thick pieces
- $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white balsamic vinegar
- 2-3 large ripe tomatoes, diced
- 1 green onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic (or more depending on your taste for garlic), peeled and finely chopped
- 4 fresh basil leaves, torn into small pieces
- Salt and Ground black pepper (to taste)
- Parmesan cheese, shredded

In a bowl, combine tomatoes, garlic, green onion, vinegar, oil and basil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. For best taste, let sit for 3 hours. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Place bread on cookie sheet and place in oven to brown both sides (or use a toaster oven). Remove from oven, and brush top of bread with olive oil. Top with tomato mixture and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Put under broiler just a minute to heat top. Leftover tomato mixture can be drizzled over salad for a dressing alternative.

Nicole Ferrari

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Electric Utility Restructuring: *Hard Lessons Give Way to Caution*

By Mike Soroohan

"Electric power will be the hottest product of the 21st Century! Soon you will be able to buy electric power at a fraction of the current cost and make thousands per day, offering others the opportunity to do the same!"

This 1998 sales pitch, from would-be retail electricity marketer Boston-Finney, symbolized at once both the potential and the potential over-hype of retail electricity restructuring. Just five years ago, electric utility restructuring, also known as “deregulation,” “retail wheeling,” or, in its most idealistic form, “customer choice,” appeared to be on course for adoption nationwide.

But since then, the retail electricity restructuring landscape has changed. While some states, such as Pennsylvania and Texas, have made fairly smooth and inclusive initial steps toward a deregulated electricity marketplace, California's restructuring attempt did not fare as well. Would-be energy suppliers either failed to materialize, got hamstrung by rules and regulations that made it nearly impossible to provide their customers with competitive electricity, or simply did not deliver on their promises. Congress, meanwhile, which earlier entertained several bills that would mandate certain retail restructuring tenets by a set date, has distanced itself from that idea.

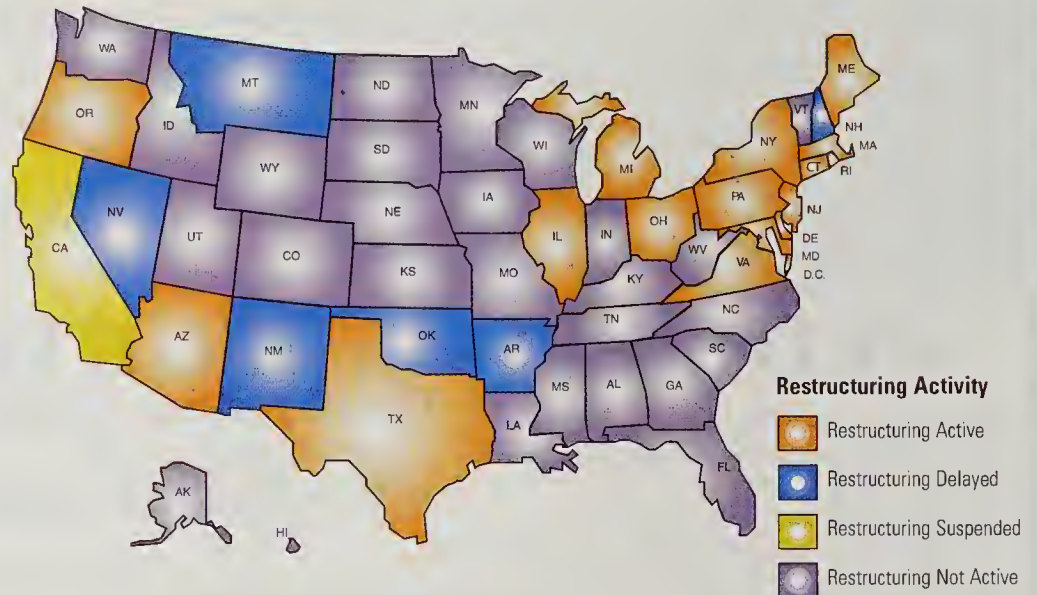
Rural Americans saw little change during the restructuring experiments. Most continued to be served by their electric co-ops, enjoying reliable power and the customer service that comes from member-owned organizations.

Today, amid uncertainty, electric utility restructuring in some parts of the country is in a holding pattern. A number of states that passed restructuring legislation have delayed implementation. In New Mexico's case, for example, state officials

“The regulatory experience scared a lot of people,” said Robert A. Smith, regulatory counsel with the National Rural Electric Association, a trade association that represents rural electric cooperatives. “No one has been in there in more than two years.”

California is expected to be the model. With more than 100 retailers ready to jump into the restructuring pool, it is the first state to see the much-hyped lower retail prices. At the end of 1998, California and more than half of the states have approved restructuring plans, with most other states having the issue under consideration.

Status of State Electric Industry Restructuring



SOURCE: 2001, 2002 EIA DATA

Enron Corporation, EnergyOne LLC, and other major energy suppliers began to position themselves as new competitors in the electricity marketplace. A variety of non-traditional utility companies, such as Boston-Finney, Amway, NuSkin International and Southland Corp. (owner of the 7-Eleven convenience store franchise), contemplated selling retail electricity, much the way one can purchase long-distance phone service today.

For residents of rural America, the prospects looked mixed at best and dire at worst. Few legislators, regulatory agencies or major utilities had rural Americans in mind, when utility players envisioned gaining new customers under restructuring. They were looking toward urban areas, not areas where only five or 10 customers per mile of electricity line lived. For rural Americans, restructuring appeared to be a train prepared to leave the station without them.

Enron's former president, Jeffrey Skilling, predicted that the electric co-ops that serve most rural Americans would not survive. Testifying before a House Commerce subcommittee in 1997, Skilling stated that electric co-ops would be "unable to compete" with the guaranteed low prices that restructuring would bring.

But California's problems began cascading even before it formally rolled out its plan. Even now, the state produces less power per resident than any other state. At peak demand,

California is still forced to import at least 25 percent of its power. Worse, the state's restructuring law—despite substantial input and lobbying from its three investor-owned utilities—forced these utilities to sell nearly all of their fossil fuel generation facilities and prohibited them from entering into long-term contracts for wholesale power.

It was indeed a gamble. The summer of 2000 proved unusually hot in California, producing record demand for power. Coinciding with this demand was a sharp spike in the cost of natural gas, and record low water levels. The state's utilities were forced to purchase power in the short-term market—in one case, paying nearly \$4,000 per megawatt-hour. The utilities had no choice but to pay market prices until the state government stepped in and imposed price caps. But blackouts and brownouts became the order of the day. By December 2000, California's wholesale electricity prices were 11 times higher than before the law went into effect. In January 2001, the state of California, through its Department of Water Resources, took over the job of purchasing wholesale power for the nearly bankrupt investor-owned utilities (one of which, Pacific Gas & Electric, did end up declaring bankruptcy in April of 2001). In September 2001, the California Public Utilities Commission voted to end retail electricity competition indefinitely.

California was not the only problem. Boston-Finney and NuSkin were forced to settle charges that their mid-level marketing operations were really "pyramid" schemes. EnergyOne, which spent \$25 million trying to build a residential retail marketing operation, shut down before it could sell a single state franchise.

And Enron pulled back on its promises almost as soon as it made them. Enron's \$10 million effort in California attracted fewer than 30,000 consumers, and it abruptly ceased operations there in 1998, barely three months after the retail market opened. Three years later, in October 2001, Enron collapsed.

If a success story could be found, it was initially thought to be Pennsylvania.

All of the state's utilities—investor-owned, municipal and electric co-op—worked with then-Governor Tom Ridge in crafting legislation that, while not giving everyone what they wanted, gave most utilities what they needed.

"We decided that competition was a choice for our customers," said Perry Stambaugh, director of communications for the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association. "How can you support cooperative principles [the six principles that guide electric co-ops' service to their members] and not allow your members choice?"

The Department of Energy said that since Pennsylvania implemented a pilot restructuring program in 1999, residential electricity prices have dropped by 15.9 percent. But some are skeptical as to whether the reductions are the result of restructuring.

"The law that created restructuring in Pennsylvania mandated the rate reduction," NRECA's Silberstein said. "It isn't necessarily the result of competition."

Silberstein added that suppliers also pulled out of the states, giving consumers little or no choice in some cases.

Silberstein said that restructuring proponents now point to Texas as the model. With electric co-ops established in 240 of the state's 254 counties and represented in virtually every state electoral district, the Texas plan could not move forward without the co-ops' collective blessing. The Texas plan protects the territorial integrity of the co-ops' service territories and gives co-ops the option of participating.

But Mike Williams, president and CEO of Texas Electric Cooperatives, said that although co-ops had a place at the table in crafting the Texas law, a sense of wariness still exists. "There's no reason to assume, even today, that the big investor-owned utilities will want to serve rural electric customers," he said.

Around the rest of the country, restructuring remains on hold as states, mindful of the California debacle, appear wary of moving too quickly.

"Right now, there's a line drawn," NRECA's Silberstein said. "There isn't a lot of activity."

Mike Sorohan is a Certified Cooperative Communicator and a freelance writer and editor based in Alexandria, Virginia.

On Hold in North Carolina

In 1997, the North Carolina General Assembly created The Study Commission on the Future of Electric Service to study whether or not North Carolina should implement "customer choice." The Study Commission met often and issued a report in April 2000 recommending that North Carolina offer choice to half of its consumers in 2005 and the remainder in 2006.

No legislation has been introduced in the General Assembly, because the California markets began to unravel and an unstable electricity market was not an option for North Carolina. Since the Study Commission report in 2000, there has been very little state focus on electric deregulation. The state's policymakers are monitoring activity in other states and federal actions to re-write national electricity rules.

The North Carolina electric cooperatives are actively engaged in the debate over the federal and state energy issues. "While the specific policy positions reflect the complexity of the issues," says Carolyn Herr Watts, senior vice president for Competitive Strategies at the cooperatives' statewide office, "we have but a single bottom-line: Residential consumers must see real benefit in order for any change to receive our support."

For more information on restructuring the nation's and North Carolina's electric utility industry, consult the following Web sites:

U.S. Department of Energy:

www.eia.doe.gov/cneaf/electricity/page/restructure.html

North Carolina Utilities Commission:

www.ncuc.commerce.state.nc.us/electric/elecrest.htm

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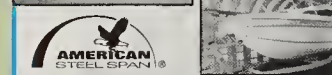
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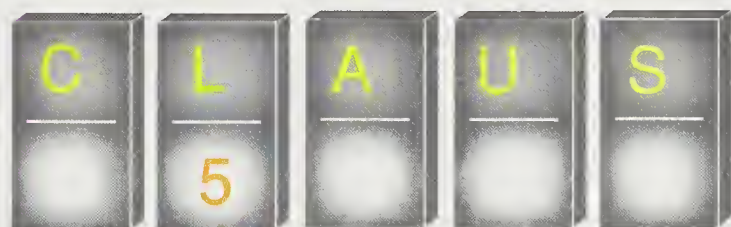
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COUNTY COUNT DOWN

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| 9 | X | | | | | |
| 8 | X | | | | | |
| 7 | X | | | | | |
| 6 | X | | | | | |
| 5 | X | | | | | |
| 4 | X | | | | | |
| 3 | X | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | | | |
| 0 | X | | | | | |

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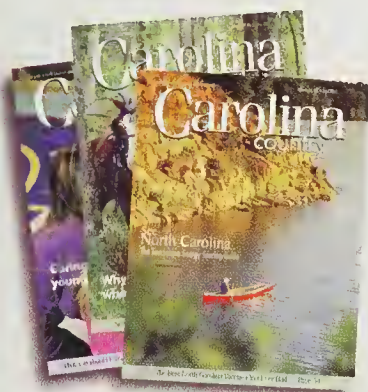
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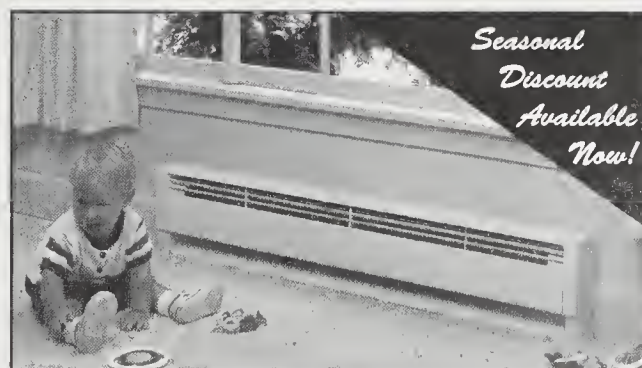
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Dec. 5. Canton.
(828) 648-7925.
www.cantonpapertown.com

Christmas Parade

Dec. 5. Jonesville/Elkin.
(336) 526-1111.

Festival of Trees

Dec. 5-8. Brevard.
(828) 885-7286.

Hometown Christmas

Dec. 6. Saluda.
Free. (828) 749-2581.

Christmas Celebration

Dec. 7. Murphy.
(828) 837-6821.

Craft Fair

Dec. 7. Hendersonville.
Rugby Middle School. Free.
(828) 891-6566.

A Tuba Christmas

Dec. 7. Columbus.
Polk High School. Free.
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Christmas Parade

Dec. 7. Burnsville.
(800) 948-1632.

Christmas Parade

Dec. 7. Dobson.
(336) 386-8962.

Holiday Homes

Dec. 7-8. Mount Airy.
(336) 786-4512.

Holiday Homes

Dec. 8. Canton.
(828) 648-7925.

Christmas Parade

Dec. 14. Andrews.
(828) 321-3584.

Olde Tyme Christmas

Dec. 14. Pilot Mountain.
(336) 368-2248.

Historical Society Party

Dec. 15. Lenoir.
(828) 758-4004.

Blue Ridge Jamboree

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Possum Drop

Dec. 31. Brasstown.
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Ongoing. Belmont.
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Dec. 2-23. McDowell.
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Tree Lighting

Dec. 3. Canton.
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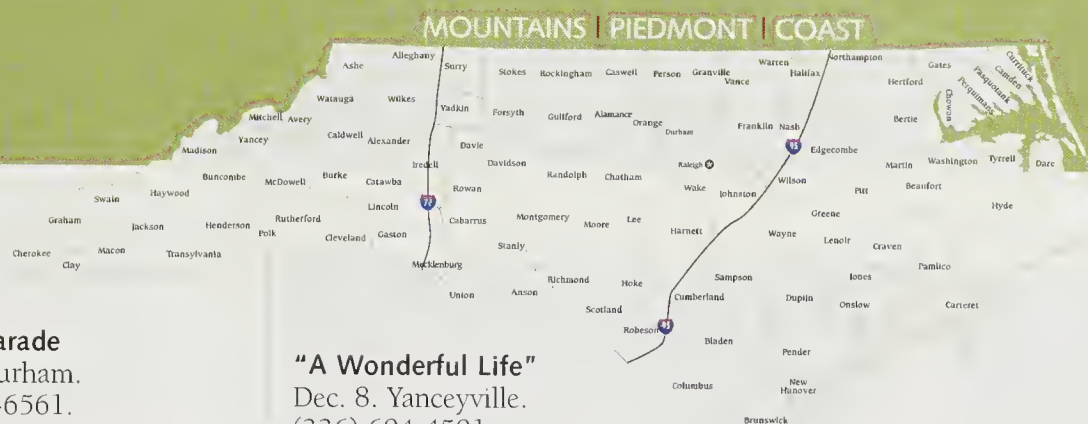
Dec. 1-7.

Christmas in the

Dec. 1-11. Asheville.
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Southern by the Sea

Dec. 1-11. Asheville.
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Singing Christmas Tree

Dec. 5-8, Fayetteville.
(910) 484-3191.

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Dec. 6-7, Waxhaw.
(704) 843-3493.

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Holiday Homes Tour

Dec. 6-8, Statesville.
(704) 878-3436.
www.downtownstatesvillenc.org

Candlelight Christmas

Dec. 6, 13, Durham.
(919) 477-5498.

Holiday Open House

Dec. 7, West Jefferson.
(336) 246-2787.
www.ashecountrysarts.org

Homes Tour

Dec. 7-8, Chapel Hill.
(919) 942-7818.

Candlelight Tour

Dec. 8, Hillsborough.
(888) 968-2060.
www.chocvb.org

Holiday Parade

Dec. 7, Winston-Salem.
Free. (336) 777-3663.

Reindeer Romp

Dec. 7, Winston-Salem.
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www.tanglewoodpark.org

Candlelight Carols

December 7, Winston-Salem.
Free. (336) 725-8344.

Holiday Parade

Dec. 7, Durham.
(919) 687-6561.
www.LightUpDurham.org

Holiday House

Dec. 7, Lexington.
(336) 249-0383.

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Dec. 7, Lexington.
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Dec. 7, Fayetteville.
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Dec. 7, Charlotte.
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www.CSarts.org

Potters Market

Dec. 7, Marion.
(828) 652-8610.

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Dec. 7-8, 14-15, 21-22.
Salisbury. (704) 636-2889,
ext. 228.

Choral Concert

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(336) 246-2787.
www.ashecountrysarts.org

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(919) 362-8980.

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Dec. 8, Fayetteville.
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1900s Christmas

Dec. 8, Mint Hill.
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(919) 732-8714.

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(336) 694-4591.

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Dec. 11-15, Fayetteville.
Free. (910) 678-7186.

Nutcracker

Dec. 12, Wingate.
(704) 289-5733.

Christmas Concert

Dec. 12, Fayetteville.
(910) 323-2410, ext. 113.

Fort Bragg Tree Lighting

Dec. 12, Fayetteville.
(910) 396-3919.

Candlelight Tours

Dec. 12-13, Greensboro.
(336) 272-5003.
www.blandwood.org

Breakfast with Santa

Dec. 14, Fayetteville.
(910) 433-1573.

Old Time Square Dance

Dec. 14, Denton.
(336) 475-9397.

El Grupo Camaleon

Dec. 14, Carrboro.
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Christmas Parade

Dec. 15, Fayetteville.
(910) 824-9627.

Festive Estates

Dec. 15, Winston-Salem.
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Magnolia Klezmer Band

Dec. 15, Carrboro.
(919) 929-2787,
ext. 206.

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Dec. 16, Wingate.
(704) 233-8300.

Kwanzaa Celebration

Dec. 16-Jan. 1,
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Dec. 17, Winston-Salem. (336) 721-1945.

Black Nativity

Dec. 20-29, Winston-Salem.
(336) 723-2266.

"A Salute to Elvis"

Dec. 21, Lexington.
(336) 249-7875.

Salem Christmas

Dec. 21, Winston-Salem.
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View masterpieces of Flemish Art and the Dutch Golden Age at North Carolina Museum of Art's exhibition "Art in the Age of Rubens and Rembrandt." Headlining the festival is Dutch master Jan Miense Molenaer, who painted "The Dentist" in 1629. The exhibit runs through Jan. 5, 2003. Call (919) 715-5923 or visit www.ncartmuseum.org.

First Fest

Dec. 31. Salisbury.
(704) 645-1753.

Bluegrass Concert

Dec. 31. Sanford.
(919) 542-5649.

Oakboro Regional Museum

Ongoing. Oakboro.
Through December, "Christmas
Exhibition." Dec. 5, Christmas
Exhibition. (919) 485-3512.

Bladen County Museum of History

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Through December, "Christmas
Exhibition." Dec. 5, Christmas
Exhibition. (919) 485-3512.

Bladen County Museum of Natural Sciences

Ongoing. Bladen County.
Through December, "Christmas
Exhibition." Dec. 5, Christmas
Exhibition. (919) 485-3512.
www.naturalscience.org

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Ongoing. Durham.
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Christmas celebration

Dec. 1. Warsaw.
(910) 293-7131.

Festival of Trees

Dec. 4-26. Greenville.
Free. (800) 376-4494.

Caroling on the Green

Dec. 5. Hertford.
(252) 426-2021.

Tour of Homes

Dec. 5. Hertford.
(252) 426-7697.

Living Tree Lighting

Dec. 6. Wilmington.
Free. (910) 341-7855.

Festival of Trees

December 6-7. Nags Head.
(252) 473-5121.

Christmas Parade

Dec. 6. Atlantic Beach.
(252) 726-2121.

Tree Lighting

Dec. 6. Shallotte.
(910) 754-4032.

Christmas Parade

Dec. 6. Carolina Beach.
(910) 458-7116.

Hometown Christmas

Dec. 6. Saluda.
(828) 749-2581.
www.saluda.com

Holly Jolly Christmas

Dec. 6. Black Mountain.
(828) 669-2300.
www.blackmountian-nc.com

Waterfowl Weekend

Dec. 6-8. Harkers Island.
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Winter Wonderland

Dec. 6, 13. Franklin.
(828) 524-6964.

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Christmas Parade

Dec. 7. Leland.
(910) 371-0148.

Winter Festival

Dec. 7. Whiteville.
(910) 642-3171.

Christmas Parade

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Dec. 7. New Bern.
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Holiday Pops Concert

Dec. 7. Morehead City.
(252) 726-0092.

Civil War Candlelight Tour

Dec. 7. Hamilton.
Fort Branch. (252) 792-4902.
www.fortbranchcivilwarsite.com

Christmas Parade

Dec. 7. Elizabeth City.
(252) 333-1575.

Candlelight Home Tour

Dec. 7. Wilmington.
(910) 762-0492.

Holiday Flotilla

Dec. 7. Carolina/Kure Beaches.
(910) 458-7116.

Swan Days Festival

Dec 7-8. Swan Quarter.
(888) 493-3826.
www.hydecountry.org

Festival Of Trees

Dec. 7-14. Morehead City.
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Christmas by the Sea

Dec. 7-22. Southport.
(910) 457-6964.

Christmas parade

Dec. 8. Aurora.
(252) 322-4188.

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Christmas Concert

Dec. 8. Murfreesboro.
Chowan College. Free.
(252) 398-6236.

Open House

December 8. Washington.
(252) 946-6208.
blindcenter@coastalnet.com

Open House

Dec. 8. Wilmington.
Free. (910) 686-9518.

Festival of Trees

Through Dec. 8. Wilmington.
Hilton Riverside. (910) 772-
5474. [www.hospicelower
capefear.org](http://www.hospicelower
capefear.org)

Candlelight Tour

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Mid-Atlantic Farm Show

Dec. 10-12. Williamston.
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www.edenton.com

City Christmas Concert

Dec. 13. Washington.
Free. (252) 946-2504.

Tours, Wassail Bowl

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www.edenton.com

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Dec. 13-14; Dec. 20-21.
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Dec. 13-14, 20-21. Morehead
City. (800) 662-5960.

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Dec. 13-21. Emerald Isle.
(800) 662-5960.
www.worthyisthelamb.com

Christmas Parade

Dec. 14. Edenton.
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Winter Holiday Festival

Dec. 14. Sneads Ferry.
(910) 327-3343.

Colonial Christmas

Dec. 14. Wilmington.
(910) 762-0570.

Christmas Parade

Dec. 14. Morehead City.
(252) 726-8872.

Holiday Homes

Dec. 14. Ocracoke.
(252) 928-7375.
www.okracoke-museum.org

Christmas Telling

Dec. 20. Wilmington.
(910) 395-2014.

Kwanzaa Celebration

Dec. 26. Robersonville.
(252) 795-4848.

New Year's Fireworks

Dec. 31. Emerald Isle.
(252) 354-3315, ext. 249.

New Year's Eve Fireworks

Dec. 31. Kure Beach.
(910) 458-8434.

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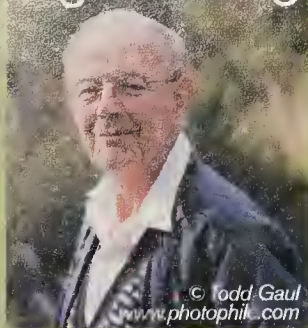
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Jim Walter HOMES



In approaching the new year, the gardener makes a mental survey of the past year: accomplishments, relaxing times in the garden, and sometimes, shortfalls. Now is the time for contemplating plans to supplement and improve the works of nature. Gardening is an interplay between nature and mankind.

GARDENING FOCUS

Christmas Rose

Christmas rose (*Helleborus niger*) bears white and rose colored blossoms from December until March. Shade-loving, it responds best to soil rich in humus. Leaf mold mixed with loam is a good soil choice. Plant bare-root roses in February and March. Potted roses may be planted anytime. Do not remove soil from around roots. Remove from pot and plant root moss with attached soil.

Scat Squirrels, SCAT!

Bulb plantings are often seen as delicacies to squirrels. After planting, while soil is still loose, place an ordinary window screen over the soil. After soil becomes more compacted, remove the screen. This prevents squirrels from digging up bulbs while allowing air and moisture into the soil. Many bulbs grow well in full sunlight but shady areas may be OK, depending on the bulb. Check planting instructions when purchasing bulbs. Different varieties require different lighting.

Mulch Coverings

Shredded leaves make a good mulch for woody ornamental plants and beds of perennials. If a leaf shedder is not available, run over the leaves with the lawn mower. Results tend to be the same. Woody-stemmed plants benefit from two to three inches of mulch, which conserves moisture and insulates roots from low winter temperatures. A mulch covering insulates spring-flowering bulbs from the winter sun—they need constant cold for proper development. Warm rays of sun benefit shoots emerging in late winter.

Collect fallen pine needles to use as mulch throughout the year around azaleas, camellias and other shrubs, and also in flower and vegetable beds. Because of their waxy coating, pine needles usually last longer than shredded bark mulches. Store extra pine needles in plastic trash bags or in a pile covered with plastic to keep needles dry.

Winter Watering

All plants, especially newly set specimens, need water during cold weather. (Some assume that overcast skies and low temperatures mean moisture is not needed by plants.) Cold, dry wind removes moisture from soil and plant tissues. The only way to know if a plant needs moisture is to determine the actual condition of its soil. When in doubt, dig up a few inches of topsoil. If it is dry, water is needed to insure internal health of plants. Potted plants indoors encounter three major problems in the winter: overwatering; underwatering; and improper light.




Protect bulb plantings from hungry squirrels by placing window screens over the soil.

Winter Pots

Large outdoor pots that contain warm-weather plants on decks and patios are safest when left outside during the winter if they are winter-hardy. Examples are terra-cotta, half barrels, poly-planters, fiberglass and concrete pots at least two inches thick. Bigger is better. Containers should have drainage holes.

Tending To Raised Beds

For long-term blooming year-after-year, feed perennial flower beds. Apply initial fertilizer one month after planting, then again before and after flowering. Now's a good time to propagate hardwood cuttings of shrubs such as spireas, forsythia, the holly group, junipers mock orange, Japanese quince and viburnum. Applying Rootone to the base of the cutting will hasten rooting and build stronger root mass. Apply it where cutting has been made at a slant, just beneath a growth bud on the stem.

A raised garden bed solves the problem of poor drainage in areas of firmly set soil. Use old railroad crossties or treated lumber to retain the soil. Or choose dry-stacked stone walls or mortared brick. Beds should not be more than five feet wide for easy access to plants. Good topsoil mixed with compost is nearly ideal for filling the raised beds. 

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New kitchen range hoods are quiet and efficient

By James Dulley

The newest kitchen range hoods are quieter, more effective and convenient to use than your old one. Although almost any new range hood will be quieter than your old one, there are significant noise-level and convenience differences among the new models. A quality range hood has a much more sophisticated engineering design than just a simple fan and cover.

With today's more energy-efficient, airtight homes, it is more important than ever to exhaust cooking fumes, grease and odors for good indoor air quality. These can quickly build up in a kitchen without adequate ventilation. For the best energy efficiency, you want a range hood that exhausts the stale air without sucking out too much already-conditioned room air or using too much electricity.

Many newer range hoods are stylish and can be attractive additions to a kitchen. They are decorative with contemporary contours, metal or painted finishes, glass covers and lights. Some of the clear glass ones offer unique and efficient cooking area lighting options from above. Believe it or not, some fancy, custom-sized ones may cost as much as \$15,000, but you can still find decorative, effective and efficient ones in the \$100 to \$200 price range.

On the other end of the style spectrum are ones designed to be hidden from view when not in use and obscured when in use. Some of them pop up several inches from behind the range when you switch them on. Others are designed to match the cabinets above the range. They hinge at the top and you pull them out from the bottom when needed. When pushed back and not in use, they look identical to other cabinet doors.

The key to efficient, effective and quiet operation of a range hood is exhausting just the right amount of air. A maximum air flow of 50 cubic feet per minute (cfm) per lineal foot of the range top is usually adequate for most cooking tasks. If you often cook particularly odorous foods, such as fish or onion, or boil a lot of water and need to remove the moisture, select a range hood with a slightly higher maximum air flow.

With most of the new quiet range hoods, you can easily talk on the telephone near one running. You can compare the noise level of various models by their ratings in "sones" (lower is quieter). Since most of the noise from range hoods is caused by the air flow, not the blower/fan motor, models with lower air flow ratings also have lower sones ratings.

Choose a model with several fan speeds for more flexibility and control of the noise level and indoor air quality. When you are just warming some food or doing other light cooking, the maximum exhaust air flow is not required. On low speed, the noise level is about one-tenth as when on high speed.

A three-speed fan is usually adequate, but many of the more expensive models offer variable speeds for more control over air flow and noise. Some models include an extra super-high boost speed setting in case you burn something or need to remove

some strong food aromas. If you are concerned about fire safety, select a model that has a built-in fire extinguisher system.

There are also important differences in the fan design. Squirrel cage types of blowers are usually quieter and more powerful than simple, lower-cost fan blades. They also operate more efficiently and use less electricity for a given amount of air flow.

The centrifugal action of the blower tends to sling airborne grease droplets into the filter so less builds up in the hood and duct. This reduces odors and the risk of a grease fire inside the hood if there is a flare up on the range. You can remove the filter periodically and wash it in the dish-washer. Some range hood models also have a Teflon coating on the interior for very easy cleaning.

Some features to consider are digital touchpad controls. An auto-off feature allows you to leave the kitchen and the blower will gradually slow and stop after five minutes. Built-in efficient night lights are great around children who tend to leave lights on. Warming trays are also convenient.

Write for (instantly download - www.dulley.com) Utility Bills Update No. 914 - buyer's guide of six quiet/efficient range vent hood manufacturers (18 models) listing styles, sizes, some noise levels, cfm air flows, features, and cooking efficiency tips. Please include \$3.00 and a business-size self-addressed stamped envelope to James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244.

Range hoods can be decorative additions to a kitchen.



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Sausage Wonton Stars

- 1 package (12 ounces) wonton wrappers
- 1 pound bulk pork sausage
- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded Colby cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ medium green pepper, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ medium sweet red pepper, chopped
- 2 bunches green onions, sliced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ranch salad dressing

Lightly press wonton wrappers onto the bottom and up the sides of greased miniature muffin cups. Bake at 350 degrees for 5 minutes or until edges are browned. In a skillet, cook sausage over medium heat until no longer pink; drain. Stir in the cheese, peppers, onions and salad dressing. Spoon a rounded tablespoonful into each wonton cup. Bake for 6-7 minutes or until heated through.

Yield: about 4 dozen.

Chocolate Coconut Bars

- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter or margarine, melted
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- 2 cups flaked coconut
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped pecans
- 1 plain chocolate candy bar (7 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons creamy peanut butter

Combine the crumbs, butter and sugar. Press into a greased 13 by 9 by 2-inch baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, in a bowl, combine coconut, milk and pecans; spread over the crust. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes; cool completely. In a small saucepan, melt candy bar and peanut butter over low heat; spread over bars. Cool until set.

Yield: about 3 dozen.



Chocolate Coconut Bars

Sausage Wonton Stars



Cherry Cheese Torte

Raspberry Gelatin Ring



For more Carolina Kitchen recipes, visit our Web site at www.carolinacountry.com

Raspberry Gelatin Ring

- 1 package (6 ounces) raspberry gelatin
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups boiling water
- 2 packages (10 ounces each) frozen sweetened raspberries, thawed and drained
- 2 cans (8 ounces each) crushed pineapple, undrained
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream

In a bowl, dissolve gelatin in water. Stir in the raspberries, pineapple and salt. Pour half into an 8-cup ring mold coated with nonstick cooking spray; refrigerate for 30 minutes or until firm. Let remaining gelatin mixture stand at room temperature. In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and sour cream until smooth. Carefully spread over gelatin in mold; top with remaining gelatin mixture. Refrigerate for 6 hours or until firm.

Yield: 12 servings.

Cherry Cheese Torte

- 2 packages (3 ounces each) Ladyfingers
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup plus 1 teaspoon sugar, divided
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract, divided
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 2 cups whipping cream
- 1 can (21 ounces) cherry or blueberry pie filling

Place a layer of Ladyfingers on the bottom and around the sides of an ungreased 9-inch springform pan. In a large mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese, 1 cup sugar and 1 teaspoon vanilla until smooth. Add lemon juice and peel; mix well. In small mixing bowl, beat cream until it begins to thicken. Add remaining sugar and vanilla; beat until stiff peaks form. Fold into cream cheese mixture. Spread half over crust. Arrange remaining ladyfingers in a spoke pattern over top. Evenly spread with the remaining cream cheese mixture. Top with pie filling. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Remove sides of pan just before serving.

Yield: 12 servings.



Electric Cooperatives Support the North Carolina Burn Center

North Carolina's electric cooperatives hosted a golf tournament in September 2002 that raised \$58,301 for the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center.

The "Learn Not to Burn" program directed by the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center sends specialists to make presentations to schools, fire departments, senior citizens, Jaycees and

other service groups. Many serious injuries and fatalities are prevented each year because children and adults learn not to burn.

Listed here are the major donors to the golf tournament. The cooperatives also are very grateful to the many other businesses and individuals who contributed to the success of the tournament.

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Bellwether Management Solutions
Brunswick EMC
Carolina Dielectric Co.
Carteret-Craven EC
ERMCO
Four County EMC
French Broad EMC
Haywood EMC
Lumbee River EMC
National Transformer Sales
Pee Dee EMC

Piedmont EMC
Pirelli Cables & Systems
Roanoke EC
Rutherford EMC
The Okonite Co.
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Gold Sponsor \$5000 and up

Lee Electrical Construction, Inc.
NCEMC
Pike Electric, Inc.

Silver Sponsor \$2000-\$4999

Asplundh Tree Expert Co.
Blue Ridge EMC
Booth & Associates, Inc.
Carolina Pole, Inc.
Central EMC
Ditch Witch of North Carolina
EnergyUnited
Grant Thornton LLP
Halifax EMC

Jones-Onslow EMC
Progress Energy
Randolph EMC
South River EMC
Sumter Utilities, Inc.
Wake EMC

Individual Golf Sponsors \$200-\$999

Altec
Cannon Technologies, Inc.
Carolina Engine
Cooper Power Systems
Crisp, Page & Currin, L.L.P.
Duke Energy Corporation
ElectriCities of NC, Inc.
EMC Technologies
ENERCO Energy Services, Inc.
MAP Enterprises, Inc.
Mark Bartholomew

Marvin Marshall
Mastec
Parkline, Inc.
Pitt & Greene EMC
PowerTech Engineering
R.W. Chapman Co.
Southeastern Data Cooperative
Southwire Company
Telelect Southeast
Tideland EMC

Non-Monetary Donations

NRTC donated golf balls for the tournament
Cardinal Travel and US Airways sponsored a Hole-in-One contest (no winner)
Sea Trail Resort donated a weekend-stay



Thanks for caring about North Carolina

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Sample Monthly Rates per 1,000

| Issue Age | Male (non-smoker) | Female (non-smoker) |
|-----------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 5 | \$.60 | \$.56 |
| 15 | \$.78 | \$.68 |
| 35 | \$ 1.16 | \$.98 |
| 55 | \$ 3.08 | \$ 2.35 |
| 65 | \$ 5.52 | \$ 3.78 |
| 75 | \$ 10.69 | \$ 7.37 |
| 85 | \$ 22.28 | \$ 16.32 |

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